

Church Union

News and Views

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Organ of the Continuation Committee  
of the  
South India Joint Committee on Union

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Vol. IV

SEPTEMBER 1933

No. 2

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# CHURCH UNION

## News and Views

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## Editorials

### Day of Prayer for Union

August 20th was again observed as a day of Prayer for Union this year. Several thousand copies of *the Call to Prayer* and of a booklet on *Meditation and Intercession* were circulated in English and in each of the Vernaculars used in the three Churches that are discussing union. Word comes from all sections of these Churches saying that the day was observed and in addition to that many pastors and catechists have written that they will observe one Sunday every month when the booklet on *Meditation and Intercession* will be used. Consequently there will be a continuous stream of intercession going up to the Throne of Grace that God may lead us in this Union Movement. As has been said from the beginning no one desires anything else than to know the will of God and then to have the power and the grace and the willingness to follow what God desires. We all most earnestly and most sincerely desire the leadership of the Holy Spirit in this movement. We believe that God wants union. We believe that Christ did actually pray for union and we are persuaded that the Holy Spirit is working for such union. These thoughts were brought out at the time of the Lausanne conference by Bishop Brent and we believe that they are absolutely true. It behoves us therefore to make this subject a very special object of prayer in order that God may really show us His way and then lead us along it.

Certainly if Christ's promise that if two or three agree on anything He will give it, is at all true, He must surely answer this prayer, for not only have two or three individuals agreed thereon, nor have only two

or three congregations prayed for this matter, but the three Churches in South India that are negotiating for union have all united in prayer that God may lead us, and together with them a host of men and women all the world around have also united on that day in prayer for union. Hence we may confidently expect that God will continue to lead us until His will is fully accomplished.

This does not necessarily mean that the Proposed Scheme as it now stands must be accepted. Those who have drafted that Scheme believe that God has led them. Multitudes of people agree with them. Extremists on both sides do not accept the Scheme nor do they propose anything that will be acceptable to those on the other side. Consequently there is no hope for union at present except along the line of the Proposed Scheme. All those who desire union will be exceedingly grateful to any individual or to any group of individuals if they will propose any other Scheme that will actually unite Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Methodists, and others into one Church. There is, however, no value in proposing a Scheme that will not unite people, that is not acceptable to any save a small group of individuals. Whatever may be our faults or our virtues we must be able to put forward a scheme that is acceptable to the people of more than one Church, otherwise there cannot be union. Let us, therefore, continue in prayer until we all find God's way, which will be the way to Union.

## **The General Assembly of the South India United Church**

The biennial meeting of the General Assembly of the South India United Church will take place at Calicut, Malabar District, from September 27—October 2. Delegates from the eight Councils of that Church will then come together and spend five days in deliberation concerning the affairs of that Church. Among the important subjects that will come before the Assembly are the following :—

1. Church Union.
2. Theological Education.
3. Work for the Young.
4. Report of Committee on Life and Work.
5. Report of Committee on Evangelism, etc. etc.

Since the Methodist (Wesleyan) Church and the Church of India, Burma, and Ceylon have already given general approval to the Proposed Scheme of Union, that question will also come before the Assembly and it is hoped that the General Assembly will give 'general approval' to the Scheme though it may call for still further modifications in some of the details thereof.



It is, of course, known that there are differences of opinion in the South India United Church with reference to the Proposed Scheme. There are some who are utterly opposed to any union on an Episcopal basis. They regard episcopacy and sacerdotalism as one and the same thing and cannot see any hope for a Christian Church in an organization that has bishops. There are others also who feel very strongly that any organization that is as effective and efficient as the Church of England cannot give the freedom that is essential to the Christian conscience. On the other hand there are many in the S.I.U.C. who feel that their present organization is too loose and that the weakness of the S.I.U.C. today, together with its lack of unity, is due to the fact that the General Assembly has no authority over the Churches and that one section of the S.I.U.C. has practically no effect or influence upon other sections of that Church. They recognise that for the sake of evangelism as well as for the sake of discipline there should be a stronger organization than we now have and consequently they are hoping that this union may give them that greater efficiency.

The S.I.U.C. recognises the very special call that has come to it to be one of the bodies negotiating in this Union Movement. They do not understand why God should have called the Churches of South India for this purpose except perhaps that here, as nowhere else in the world, the idea of union has grown naturally and slowly from the earliest days. Also perhaps it is true that in South India as in very few other places in the world, the whole body of Christians are bound together by closer ties and deeper spiritual fellowship. The emphasis upon organization has never been so strong in South India as it is in other places nor have the divisions between groups been as bitter as elsewhere. The L. M. S. in Travancore and the Church Missionary Society in Tinnevely, as well as the American Madura Mission, give us an example of how these different bodies can work together in the closest harmony in spiritual things. The spiritual leaders of the Tinnevely movement had a tremendous influence not only in their own diocese but were constantly called upon to go to other areas to conduct spiritual meetings. Among the very recent leaders of that kind the Rev. T. Walker was an outstanding example of a man filled with the Spirit of God, a keen student of the Bible, an earnest evangelist whose work carried him far and wide throughout the whole of South India. He was in the Telugu territory when his last illness seized him. But that shows the breadth of his influence and it is the influence of similar men that permeated the whole of South India and therefore there is no better place than South India for a movement like Church Union to start. It is also probably true that if union does not succeed in South India it will not succeed anywhere. God's call has come to us to lead in this movement. Having put our hand to the plough we may not turn back, but we can be assured that if we depend on God for leadership the final outcome will be right, provided we do not lose the vision.

## Federation versus Union

There are still some people in S. India who think that a federation of existing Churches would be a better step to take now than to attempt to form an actual organic union. In a federal union they think each Church can retain its own organization and its own rules and regulations while having a friendly relation with other Churches which still retain their organizations.

There has undoubtedly been a very great movement toward fellowship among many of the Protestant Churches. Whereas 75 years ago there was practically no fellowship between sister Presbyterian, Lutheran, or Methodist Churches, today there is a deep and genuine fellowship among these Churches and in a multitude of cases ministers go freely from one denomination to another as do Church members. A family moving from a place to another where they had been members of a Presbyterian Church will not hesitate to join either a Congregational or a Methodist Church in a place to which they go, if there is no Presbyterian Church there. So in any of the leading Protestant denominations at present many members will be found who have come from many other denominations.

This is, of course, to a very large extent a genuine movement for Church Union and is in a large part the reason for discussing organic union at this time. The question remains, however, what gain there will be in any federal union.

The Federal Council of Churches in America comprises nearly all of those Protestant denominations that have resulted from the Reformation of the 16th century. The Protestant Episcopal Church and certain of the smaller sects which are offshoots of the various denominations, are the only bodies not included in the Federal Council. The Federal Council through its officers speaks on behalf of all its members expressing their own mind on such subjects as peace, temperance, labour, and industry. It is forbidden by its very constitution to deal with those theological doctrines that are peculiar to the various Churches and it cannot commit any Church to any course of action. It has not brought any two Churches into intercommunion who were not in that relationship before entering the Federal Council. There are Presbyterian, Congregational, Lutheran, Baptist, and Methodist Churches in that Council, but even though they are members of that Federation some of these bodies do not have intercommunion with each other. We know of no federation that has actually changed the relation between two denominations on that score. We cannot conceive either of a federation that might be planned here in South India that would give intercommunion between Lutherans, Baptists, Episcopalians and others. These bodies would definitely repudiate any such practice and would not enter into a federation if those practices were to be carried out. The difference



between organic union and federation lies right there. In organic union those who are negotiating must face all the problems involved and must come to a mutual conclusion with reference to these matters. Federal union ignores these differences and permits bodies to continue much as they are and therefore is not an improvement over our present situation. Federation will not solve our differences or difficulties. Organic union begins with that purpose in view. It must bring together those who are now separated and must result in one organization within which all members have equal standing and equal rights and does therefore result in intercommunion and fellowship.

## Shall We Make Haste?

The question is often asked when will the Proposed Scheme be put into practice and when will the resultant Church come into existence? The most ardent advocates of the Proposed Scheme hope that it may be possible for the present Assembly of the S.I.U.C. to give general approval to the Scheme and then for all three bodies to move forward during the next two or four years with practical preparation for union so that it might be possible to have the final consummation not later than, say, 1936.

On the other hand many of those who are heartily in favour of the Union recognise the difficulty of doing things as quickly as that and look forward to the inauguration of the Union as practically impossible before another six or eight years have gone by, or possibly even ten.

It must be remembered, however, that the union of the two sister Churches in Scotland, which was consummated a couple of years ago, took 25 years from the date of the beginning of practical steps in that direction. The consummation of union among the three Methodist bodies in England, which took place only in 1932, was the result of 28 years of consultation. The fact is that the first resolution looking to that end was moved in the Wesleyan Conference fifty years ago! Likewise the union between the Presbyterians, Methodists and Congregationalists in Canada took some 28 years before consummation could take place. It therefore stands to reason that, if it took at least a quarter of a century for Churches of a similar tradition and practically the same doctrine to come together in one body, it will take not less, but probably more time, for Churches differing so widely as the S.I.U.C., Methodist (Wesleyan) and the Anglican bodies to become one.

There is no haste in this movement. We are overcoming difficulties that arose four centuries ago and large groups of earnest people, such as are contained in these various denominations, do not move rapidly. A few leaders may see the vision, but it will take them a long time to make that vision known to all within their groups. Patience, forbearance, continuous prayer, frequent consultation, and a genuine dependence upon the leadership of the Spirit are the qualities that are necessary for bringing this

movement to a successful issue. Men must change their minds before there can be union and men do not change with reference to their inherited traditions suddenly. It may even be necessary that children should grow up into a new atmosphere where this great vision can be more clearly seen, before the consummation can come.

But he who has seen the vision cannot turn back but must move on, patiently trying to win others to the cause he holds dear. In God's good time the consummation will come. The seed has been sown throughout the world. It is fructifying in many places. In some places the ground is already turning green with the new growth. The day of harvest will come in due time after God's sunshine and rain give the development and the growth that is needed to bear fruit. Have faith in God and work on. Remember the promise 'They shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint'. Let us therefore continue to walk until the end of the journey.

## Hope for Union

There is real hope for union when one, believing what the Bishop of Assam believes, expresses 'a strong desire that the real differences between the negotiating bodies should be faced.' This is, of course, a definite pledge on his part that he will, through careful study and fellowship with others, try to understand the position of the Evangelical, as well as ask the Evangelical to study his beliefs and practice.

We would add our request to his. Let us all, evangelicals and sacramentalists alike, study the positions of others. Dr. Mott has said that the whole of mankind is divided into sacramentalists and mystics. This makes it difficult for either to enter into the spirit underlying the views of the other. Many evangelicals have studied historically and experimentally the sacramentalist's view. They may still find that they cannot share it, but they can (and many do) join to the full in the devotion to our Lord which underlies it.

Similarly we plead that sacramentalists shall study the spirit underlying Evangelical worship and thought. In unity of the spirit of devotion to Christ, expressed in varying thoughts and modes though it be, we shall be able to unite.

God's grace is one, and He bestows it on every believing soul who in all sincerity submits himself to his Lord and Master. Multitudes of men can testify that they are 'in Christ' and can say with Paul 'I live, yet not I but Christ liveth in me'. Could we accept Christ's law, 'By their fruits ye shall know them', we probably could get closer together, and unitedly worship our one Lord. We would not perhaps all think alike, but we could at least respect each other and learn more fully the richness of the Love of God.



## Articles

### Further thoughts on the Scheme and Amendments thereto

By DR. VERNON BARTLET, Oxford.

In continuation of what I wrote in the May number of *Church Union, News and Views*, I now offer some further comments, on the basis of the recent explanatory statement by the Metropolitan on Decision 7 of the Episcopal Synod, for which I begged that all should wait before judging the effect of the Synod's Decisions as a whole on the Scheme in its present form. Since Decision 7 affects the very idea of the Scheme, as contemplated from the first, its main points must be here cited (the italics being my own).

In the judgment of the Episcopal Synod, the rewording of 'the Pledge' agreed to last December definitely meant that, 'in its application to the Anglican Church, every honest endeavour shall be made that to no former Anglican congregation shall a non-episcopal minister be *appointed*, or be sent for occasional celebrations of the Holy Communion' i.e. by a recognized authority in the united Church 'and that opportunities for securing the ministrations of episcopally ordained clergy will not, because of the union, be withdrawn from any congregation which now enjoys such ministrations.' The pledge in question itself says that 'the United Church will at all times be careful not to allow any over-riding of conscience either by Church authorities or by majorities'—presumably including congregations in relation to their own minorities—'and that it will not in any of its administrative acts knowingly transgress the long-established traditions of any of the Churches from which it has been formed. Neither forms of worship or ritual, nor a ministry, to which they have not been accustomed or to which they conscientiously object, will be *imposed* upon any congregation; and no arrangements with regard to these matters will knowingly be made, either generally or in particular cases, which would either *offend the conscientious convictions of persons directly concerned*, or which would hinder the development of complete unity within the United Church or imperil its progress towards union with other Churches.'

Now I think it must be allowed that, if taken literally and without due regard to the basic principles of the whole Scheme, as expounded in the Foreword (pages vi-viii) to the very draft containing the above words, a reading of them is possible which would exclude a non-episcopally ordained minister of the united Church being appointed to the pastorate, or even an occasional ministry of the Word and Sacraments, in any previously Anglican congregation, so long as even a single member of it urged his or her conscientious objection thereto. Accordingly it is a grave new fact that Decision

7 assumes that 'the Uniting Churches have definitely agreed,' by the rewording just cited, to what it goes on to give as its purport. For this by its phrasing inevitably suggests to most readers the above strict limitation to the liberty of choice open for ex-Anglican congregations. Such a rigid interpretation has, indeed, been disclaimed by the Metropolitan, on the basis of the fact that 'appointment' to a congregation or being 'sent for occasional celebrations of the Holy Communion' refers only to the act of a recognized authority in the united Church—a bishop or a synod—and not to the act of the congregation itself. In the latter case a former Anglican congregation would not be debarred from inviting at its own instance a non-episcopally ordained minister of the Church to celebrate the Holy Communion, on special occasions, provided there was no serious opposition in the congregation to such a step.

So far, so good. But what if such a congregation requested the 'appointing' or 'sending' authority, bishop or synod, to appoint to it, permanently or temporarily, such a non-episcopally ordained minister, as being the choice of this local worshipping unit of the whole Church's being? Would that be allowable? I hold that the wording of 'the pledge', even in its latest form, does not exclude, and was not meant by the Joint Committee as a whole to exclude, any such action, as an 'over-riding of conscience'. On the contrary, to use it to rule out such action would be a breach of the undertaking, integral to the Scheme from the first, to give due weight to the positive elements in 'the long-established traditions' of congregationalism, no less than to those of episcopacy. Nay more: any such restriction really rests on a *special theory* of episcopal orders (see below), contrary to the very basis of the Scheme.

Thus the reworded pledge against a ministry offensive to conscience being 'imposed upon any congregation' does not preclude choice of non-episcopally ordained ministers for ex-Anglican congregations, if only two conditions be satisfied. (1) Such a minister must be the choice of the congregation itself *as a whole*, so as to avoid serious division among its members; and (2) special provision ought then to be made, in some way that 'opportunities for securing the ministrations of episcopally ordained clergy' may not be 'withdrawn' from any whose consciences would otherwise be offended, by having to choose between a ministration (that of the congregation's duly appointed pastor) as to the 'validity' of which they stood in doubt, and doing without regular communion altogether. To refuse *in toto* to an ex-Anglican congregation a right to choose any *recognized minister of the now united Church*, irrespective of his prior ordination, might mean 'over-riding of conscience' in the congregation as a whole by the conscience of a small minority or even a single individual: certainly it 'would hinder the development of complete unity within the Church'.

Nor does the pledge to respect 'long-established tradition' warrant such a restriction being put on ex-Anglican congregations. For to most Anglicans



of 'Evangelical' conviction the tradition excluding the ministry of non-episcopally ordained persons is not really a matter of conscience, save in so far as bound up with their feeling that the corporate attitude of the communions to which those ministers belonged was 'schismatic', in a sense alien to the basal principle of Christian love, as including concern for organic unity in the one visible Body of Christ. Once guarantees are forthcoming that the will to unity in that sense is present, any serious scruples of conscience they have in the matter fall away; and existing unity in Christ and His Gospel becomes paramount.

This is what the epoch-making Appeal of Lambeth 1920 brought about, particularly in South India; and nothing ecclesiastical can there be the same as before. It is relative to the spirit and principles of that Appeal, accepted whole-heartedly, that the South India Scheme must be viewed and construed. Therein lies the key to the whole matter, and to all its details, where distinctive church-traditions have to be harmonized in a unity whose watchword is 'comprehension and not limitation' ('Foreword', p. vi) as regards the *positive* rather than the negative features of each tradition. The non-episcopal side has made the greatest single sacrifice of tradition, in accepting 'the historic episcopate'—in the positive religious sense in which Evangelical Anglicans hold it, side by side with their more Catholicizing fellow-churchmen, viz., as the office specially symbolizing and fostering unity in the Church Universal. This being so, and separately organized competitive Church action being at an end, for 'Catholic' minorities, however small, to have the right to 'impose on a congregation' of Anglican antecedents its own convictions as to 'Apostolic Succession' in practice, would seem alien to the whole spirit of the Scheme. It would mean 'building up again' in half of the united Church the principle of schism in the ministry—and through this object-lesson in the laity also—which an enlarged Christian faith and love from both sides had 'dissolved' on the inclusive basis of that Scheme. It would be going back at this point to a type of traditional 'Catholicism' which would never for a moment have considered so inclusive a scheme—any more than it would have framed the Lambeth Appeal of 1920, with its new valuation of kindred religious experience.

Let us all frankly face the fact that on both sides traditional forms are being subordinated to their spirit, the essential values that have given them life for their most truly Christian adherents; and that it is with the more truly catholic or universal future type of Catholicism, no less than of the Evangelicalism which had to 'protest' or solemnly affirm its loyalty to the original Christian Gospel rather than to its later developments—and not simply with the past or even present forms of either—that the South Indian Church Scheme is concerned. It is, in its very idea, really a new thing; a consciously and deliberately Evangelical Catholicism or a Catholic Evangelicalism, such as Richard Baxter only half-glimpsed. It is for that reason above all that it is so significant—concerning as it does the whole

future of Christendom—and that perfect fidelity throughout to its master principles (in the Basis of Union) is so important.

Having discussed thus fully in connexion with Decision 7 the vital and determinative principles of the Episcopal Synod's instructions to its members on the Joint Committee, I need speak only briefly on others of these which involve divergent convictions. On Decisions 2 and 3 touching 'Voting by Houses', as a method for safeguarding the special responsibility for Faith and Order proper to the Episcopate, I would repeat that it seems to me an equitable provision under the Scheme. As regards Decision 6, touching participation of presbyters in the consecration of the bishop of their diocese, I agree that to leave the matter for each diocese to decide might foster divisions of feeling, and so I would prefer one single custom on the lines of the Swedish precedent. But the point seems hardly a vital one in any form, provided the phrasing of 'the pledge' were made such as to give no opening to such absolute prohibition of non-episcopally ordained ministry for ex-Anglican Congregations as Decision 7 seems to suggest. Perhaps this could best be attained by altering the last seven lines of the pledge so as explicitly to provide for the conscience of congregational minorities, thus: 'and in cases where a ministry is appointed (in keeping with the general wish of the congregation) at whose hands a minority is unable conscientiously to receive Holy Communion, adequate special provision for them will be arranged'. Further, as we have recently been reminded by the Church of Scotland and the Methodist Conference, others besides Anglicans have 'long-established traditions' that are to them matters of conscience, some of which are inconsistent with the theory of 'Apostolic Succession' and its bearing on 'valid' orders and sacramental communion. To allow, then, ex-Anglican clergy to continue to teach the *negative* bearing of these principles, in the case even of recognized ministers in the united Church, would seem manifestly to 'conflict with its governing principles', and with 'the process of growing together into one life and of advance towards complete spiritual unity'. I cannot see, therefore, how the Joint Committee can accept the last part of Decision 7 as it stands. Were the further definition desired in Decision 9 made (as was surely meant) in terms of 'the maintenance and extension of full communion and fellowship with those Churches with which the Churches from which the Church of South India has been formed have severally had such fellowship', this fact would become yet more clear. As to the Decision on 'Confirmation' I rather deprecate the form of note suggested as 'commending' it by arguments which are disputable.

To sum up. The Joint Committee must, in fidelity to the idea of its scheme all along, hold fast to the inclusive reading throughout, in the interests of the larger Catholicism of the future; preserving positive liberty of conscience for all its members, refusing them any right to impose the negative aspects of their convictions on others, especially in matters of corporate action.



## The Church of Scotland and Lambeth

Readers of *Church Union* hardly need to be reminded of the Appeal to all Christian People issued by the Lambeth Conference of 1920. It was received by many Churches with interest, and the leading non-episcopal Churches in England responded to the Appeal by appointing delegates to meet, as they did from time to time from 1921 to 1925, with delegates appointed by the Archbishop of Canterbury, with a view to considering the possibility of union. When the Appeal came to the Church of Scotland and the United Free Church of Scotland its receipt was courteously acknowledged, but the reply of both Churches was that as they were fully occupied in negotiation for union with one another they were unable for the time to respond to the Appeal.

The successful issue of the negotiations in 1929 removed the difficulty that had been felt, and when the Lambeth Conference of 1930 renewed the invitation to enter into conference it was felt by many that the invitation ought to be accepted. When the Archbishop of Canterbury—himself the son of one who had been an eminent leader in the Church of Scotland—asked if he might be permitted to present the invitation in person, permission was gladly given, and in a memorable speech he laid the case before the General Assembly of 1932. He made it quite clear that for a long time to come there could be no thought of organic union, but tried to show what could be done by conference to remove misunderstandings and prepare the way for co-operative action between the National Churches of England and Scotland.<sup>1</sup>

Later in the day the question of accepting His Grace's invitation was considered. Able speeches in favour were made by a number of eminent leaders, but it was soon evident that widely differing views were held. To some it seemed the time was not ripe, and that the union achieved in 1929 ought to be thoroughly cemented by several years of common living before the minds of the faithful were perplexed by any idea of wider union. Others went further and strongly deprecated any proposal to have dealings with the descendants of those who had been the persecutors of their 'Covenanting' ancestors, or with those whose Romeward trend was unmistakable. It looked as if the invitation conveyed by the Archbishop would be rejected,

<sup>1</sup> As the position of the Church of Scotland is sometimes misunderstood it is well to state that while it is a 'national' Church in the sense of undertaking to provide religious ordinances for the whole nation, it is not an 'established' Church in the sense that the State has any control over it. The King is in no sense the head of the Church. He shows his interest in the Church of his northern realm by appointing a representative, with the title of Lord High Commissioner, to the annual meeting of the General Assembly; but his representative sits outside the house, and has absolutely no control over the proceedings of the Assembly.

but a wise speech from the principal of New College, Edinburgh (Rev. Alex. Martin, D.D.) turned the tide. At a later stage a strong committee, in the membership of which differing views were represented, was appointed, and in the course of the year two meetings with the representatives of the Anglican Communion were held.

When the General Assembly of 1933 convened it had before it a short report from its committee. With this there was a good deal of disappointment. It seemed that very little progress had been made. It had been found that the two Churches, 'as branches of the Church adhering to the Reformation' (to use the words of a statement issued by the Conference), had much in common, and means of co-operation were suggested. But when questions of intercommunion and the recognition of ministers were approached, it was obvious that there was little possibility of any agreement being reached which would satisfy the Church of Scotland. When the matter was brought before the Assembly Principal Martin and several other members of the committee did their best to show that a hopeful beginning had been made, but failed to rouse the Assembly. A motion to stop the negotiations did not receive much support, but an addition to the official motion was proposed by a venerable minister of the Church, Dr. Archibald Fleming. Having ministered for many years to a Scottish Congregation in London he had had ample opportunities of coming into close contact with the Church of England and had enjoyed the friendship of many of its leaders. But such a friendship could not blind him to the fact that all negotiations, so far as the Church of England was concerned, could only be carried on within limits, and it seemed to him that this ought to be clearly recognised by the Assembly. He accordingly proposed the following addition:—

'The General Assembly, however, desire, with a view to prevent any possible misunderstanding, that the committee should respectfully inform the representatives of the Church with which it confers that any agreement with regard to the Orders and Sacraments of the conferring Churches can only be based on the recognition of the equal validity of the Orders and Sacraments of both Churches, and of the equal standing of the accepted communicants and ordained ministers in each.'

This proposition was supported in a vigorous speech, in which Dr. Fleming contrasted the freedom with which Anglicans were welcomed to spiritual privileges in the Church of Scotland with the very niggardly exercise of spiritual hospitality which would be the utmost which a Scottish visitor to England might expect. The attempts to show that such an addendum was superfluous were unavailing, and the Assembly adopted it, though only by a narrow majority.

It is not easy, writing at this distance, to say what the effect of this action will be. Something depends on the meaning to be attached to the



resolution. So far as the Scottish representatives are concerned they have of course never doubted that their orders and membership were in every way equal to those of the Church of England, and they have doubtless been perfectly frank in stating this. But if the restriction now imposed means that before any further discussion on Orders and Sacraments takes place the Anglican members must declare that they look on Presbyterian Orders and Sacraments as of equal validity with their own, it is obvious that for this they are not ready. Apparently, therefore, the discussions at future meetings will be confined to questions of co-operation in social service, and problems like slum clearance and unemployment.

Several English papers have expressed approval of the restriction now imposed. The *British Weekly* says:—

‘It is very well to say, and it is quite true, that on matters which are short of supreme importance, it is an agreeable and Christian-like thing to meet round a table, to enjoy each other’s hospitality, and to get to know each other. On matters of very deepest importance, however, it is not the very highest and not the very truest form of friendliness to go on indefinitely, without ever broaching what is really the crux of the whole question between the Church of England at this moment and, on the other side the Church of Scotland and the Reformed Churches of the world.’

Another paper says:—

‘The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland took a step which English Nonconformity ought perhaps to have taken some years ago. . . . Dr. Fleming commended his motion in words which had something of John Knox’s downrightness in them. His addendum brings the negotiations with Lambeth into the atmosphere of cold but wholesome reality. It is a plain intimation to the Anglican authorities of the only terms on which any sort of reunion talk, whether with Scottish Presbyterians or English Free Churchmen, can have the slightest chance of a practical outcome. And it is best that Lambeth should be told the truth in plain terms.’

It may seem to Anglican readers, and perhaps to some others, that the decision is to be attributed only to Presbyterian pride. Equal terms are demanded, and since Lambeth cannot grant these it seems as if in future negotiations all vital matters must be excluded. Lambeth is debarred by its view of orders for sanctioning general intercommunion; but might not the tension which is now felt in many places be relieved to some extent by arrangements which a little further friendly intercourse might have rendered possible? If the way to these is barred by the Anglicans’ decision, the decision is surely to be regretted, even from a Presbyterian point of view. And may a Presbyterian be pardoned for

saying that the restriction under which future conversations are to be conducted deprives the bishops of much benefit which they might have received from further intercourse with a group of men whose great learning in all church matters entitled them to speak with authority?

Be this as it may, the decision of the Scottish Assembly will do good if it leads those who stand in the Lambeth position to realise how strong is the feeling in other branches of Christ's Church that along the lines of Lambeth no organic union can ever be achieved. One of the most important questions which the Lambeth Conference of 1930 had to decide was whether intercommunion was a step towards union or a sign of its consummation. To the great regret of members of other Churches the Conference chose the latter alternative. When an eminent and learned Anglo-Catholic was asked if he knew of a case in which union had come before intercommunion, he had to go back to the healing of the Arian schism for an instance. On the other side instance after instance can easily be produced. Who can imagine that the Scottish union of 1929, or the Methodist union of 1932, could ever have taken place if one of the negotiating Churches had said, 'we regret that until organic union has taken place we do not see our way to meet you at the Table of our Common Lord, unless under certain clearly defined conditions for we regard your orders as lacking something vital?' If the proposed union in South India is brought about it will be an exception; but the exception is allowed by the Free Churches only on the understanding that after union the freedom which they now enjoy is to be in no way curtailed, but rather increased.

Those who have enjoyed the privilege which membership of our Joint Committee has brought are able to some extent to enter into the attitude of mind which forced the bishops at Lambeth to this view of the relative position of union and intercommunion. The bishops, many of them with deep regret at the separation which it involves, have definitely adopted the view that to sanction intercommunion before union would not be the best way to union in the long run. Many of us have learned to respect their conviction and refrain from all censorious judgment. But we find it exceedingly difficult to persuade the Churches to which we belong to be equally understanding. Since the refusal of intercommunion leads in countless cases to local disunion it seems to them that the denial of the right is a denial of the fundamental principle of Christian brotherhood. Will not our Anglican friends realise that it is at least possible that this and not Presbyterian pride is at the root of our determination not to narrow by any restrictions on intercommunion the liberty we now enjoy?

J. H. MACLEAN.

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## Partners in the Gospel

As plans for a united Church get more definite there is a tendency to dwell more and more on particular questions and the danger of a breakdown on some individual point gets more and more threatening. It is easy to get agreement on a general statement concerning the One Church for which our Lord planned, for which St. Paul laboured so incessantly : it is supremely difficult to get agreement on a question of participation in ordinations, or of marriage laws and such particular points.

And so it is wise to go back in thought continually to the real object on the Union and to the eternal principles underlying it. They may be conveniently summed up in the phrase 'Partners in the Gospel'. The 'Gospel' is not simply the good news given to each sinner that atonement has been made by Christ for sin. It includes the whole purpose of God for mankind, and God has made us fellow workers with Himself in that plan of a regenerated universe : and if we are fellow workers with Him, we cannot be at odds among ourselves. The disadvantages and the hindrances to God's working entailed by disunion are all well-known. Overlapping, competition among Christians, duplication of work, waste of lives, of prayer, of resources; and the results are a great weakening of God's work, not to speak of the scandal of a divided Church, to which no man cares to listen.

But I want now to consider the benefits of Union; they are so many that it is difficult to know where to begin. There are, of course, the advantages of eliminating waste of workers and money. In many towns in India we find two sets of people trying to do the same thing, dividing their energies, duplicating their efforts, taxing the Christian congregations twice over for schools, churches, and institutions of every kind and for the maintenance of two (or more) sets of workers. Think what an immense number of workers and what large resources would be set free for further work both there and further afield, by Union. Union will double our effective power. In these days of scarcity and retrenchment that is a most compelling consideration. But it may rightly be considered to be on a lower and simply practical plane.

St. Paul, in pleading for unity, always emphasised the variety of function in the different members of the body and the need which they all have one of another, as well as the loss which is entailed by the separation or failure of any one of them. And it is along that line that we should weigh the advantages of Union against any other considerations which might appear to make for continuance of (friendly ?) separation. From this point of view it may not be amiss to note that St. Paul lays more emphasis on 'ministries' (i.e. services, *diaconiai*) than on authority. I am writing this on St. Bartholomew's day, on which the two classic instances of the exercise of authority as opposed to common service occurred, in France

in the sixteenth and in England in the seventeenth century. And the old Gospel read every St. Bartholomew's day in the Liturgy is Christ's warning against insistence on authority and His plea for service to the uttermost. And that brings me to another point. All the great Reformers, Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, made the equality of ministers a chief plank in their platform. By narrowing the implication of ministers to the 'professional' ministry, I think we have been led astray. The point is not equality: to the meaner member, St. Paul says, we should give the more honour: all are necessary: all are equal before God. But there is variety of function: and our danger is that equality of ministers may develop into identity of function and the eye may begin to say to the ear, because I am not the ear, I am not of the body, which St. Paul deprecates! Over fifty years ago I was taught a childish hymn—

‘Jesus bids us shine,  
You in your small corner,  
I in mine.’

There is enshrined in this childish verse the whole principle of the co-operation of the members of the body and a warning against the changing of our ‘corners’.

If our union can be brought about on these lines—co-operation of all—pooling of the gifts of God—putting our all at the disposal of all—it will be a success because it will be built on God's plan.

When one looks at the other Churches as an Anglican, one covets certain gifts they have to bring. The Methodist Church has succeeded in enlisting their ordinary Church members in the work of the Church, in a way which many other Churches have failed to do. They have preserved under other names those ministries which in the early days flourished in the Church, and were afterwards called ‘minor’ orders: they became obsolete or merely nominal as the great religious houses, and in more modern days innumerable societies, began to discharge their functions. The gain to the united Church of a restoration of these ministries will be enormous.

Again the Presbyterian Churches both in Scotland and elsewhere have a tradition of the careful training of ministers and teachers, of scholarship, research and of sound learning which has given to them a leadership in Christian thinking which all must admire. No theological library is complete without their books, which have moulded Christian theology for a century or more. And in practical administration their separation of pastoral and of executive functions contains a principle which many overburdened pastors in other Churches may well envy.

Turning to the Independent Churches we find the worth of the individual believer emphasised in a way which may help many a more highly organised Church: the emphasis on the right of the local congregation to a real voice in its affairs is necessary in these days of departmentalism.



All these gifts and many more are there for the using, if union can be effected. The Anglican Church will bring its appeal to the unbroken history of the Church, its reverence for the revelation of God it has received, its sacramental life ever emphasising the great condescension of God, who for our sakes was made man, its ordered ministry with its differentiation of function and its earnest endeavour to unite in one body different sides of the one great truth in its various 'schools of thought'. No Church will come into the Union empty-handed: each brings its wealth into the united Church. Apart, each Church is leading a maimed life, robbed of gifts which belong to the whole, lacking the service which is confined to sections: together, they will have not simply the sum of their separate gifts but an overflowing abundance which God gives to all the ministry of His servants, if it is sanctified by love.

HARRY MADRAS.

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## The Bishop of Dornakal on the Calcutta Resolution of 1933

I am quite clear, and therefore am happy to assure you, that our Resolution does not mean and was not intended to mean, that we (the Episcopal Synod) have not recognised 'the equal certain validity of non-episcopal ministry'. I shall now fully explain the Resolutions.

*First.* The 'action' (referred to in Res. I) was Res. IX of 1932 in which we said that the majority of us would not call in question the action of any of our delegates who joined in such communions on certain specified occasions. Our present Resolution merely says, with a *unanimous* voice that by passing that Resolution, we did not intend to convey the impression (and we did not wish that any body else should interpret our Resolution as conveying a declaration) that in our opinion 'the ministries of other Christian bodies at present in separation from us are of equal certain validity or identical with those of the Churches which have retained the succession of Bishops'. There are people in our Church who hold that the ministries of other Christian bodies at present in separation from us (i.e. Baptists, Lutherans, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Methodists etc.) are *not* of equal certain validity, or identical, with those of the Churches (i.e. Roman, Greek Orthodox) which have retained the succession of Bishops.

The Anglican Communion has never officially pronounced whether they are such or not. A Committee of the Lambeth Conference acknowledged their ministries as valid ministries of the Universal Church—but the question of these ministries being of equal certainty or being identical, with the Episcopal ministries and therefore being universally acceptable—they never avowed. In fact in the Lambeth Conference of 1920 they pleaded for

an Episcopal ministry in order that all might go to any altar or communion without any doubt in their minds.

The Episcopal Synod says that by giving the permission we did in 1932, it was not our intention to convey the impression (which other people have said that it did carry) that we had decided this question of identity of ministries. No, we say, when we gave the permission, that permission and the consequent action had nothing to do with a declaration on the question of equality or otherwise, of these ministries. In other words, we gave the permission not because we have come to the conclusion that all ministries were equal, or of equal certain validity, but because we felt that in these negotiations we had come to a stage when a lack of such a participation would destroy the spiritual fellowship in unity towards which we were growing and in consequence would jeopardize the negotiations.

*Secondly*, they also threw it in our faces that by assenting to this participation now (by Res. IX of 1932) the Episcopal Synod had given the impression that we had actually gone back on the fundamental basis of union, namely the unification of the ministry under the Historical Episcopate, and that therefore the Episcopal Synod could no longer be entrusted with the task of seeing this project through. Hence the Synod says in Sec. 2 that by passing Res. IX, we have not any whit receded from our position in regard to the Historic Episcopate for the Church of South India.

To sum up. Exactly as the S.I.U.C. and the W.M.C. say that by accepting the Historic Episcopate they should not be interpreted as having accepted any particular theory of Episcopacy, so we now say that by permitting a limited intercommunion between the delegates of these negotiating bodies even at the present time, we ought not to be interpreted as having accepted any theory of 'equal validity' of the theory of 'identity' of all non-episcopal ministries nor as having given up the demand for the Historic Episcopate as one of the fundamental Basis of Union.

*Thirdly*. The Episcopal Synod has not any whit receded from the agreement in the Scheme, Sec. 10 of p. 8. We reconsidered it because question had been raised by our people. The Synod unanimously came to the conclusion that that provision must stand—if the Church was to be a united Church. Any interpretation therefore of our Decision 6 that will be contrary to that section is to misunderstand it. 'Every honest endeavour shall be made that to no former Anglican congregation shall a non-episcopal minister *be appointed or be sent*'. These words say exactly what we do mean. The Synod does not say that no congregation shall request such an appointment or such an occasional celebration. It says (putting it in the active voice)—that those who are responsible for appointments shall not do such a thing as an administrative act on *their* initiation. It was explained to the Synod and understood and accepted by the Synod that we can make rules neither for individuals nor individual congregations. The liberty of such is understood to be left intact.



It was demanded by a section of our Church that the present Anglican Bishops and Clergy should pledge themselves to teach Ex-Anglicans that going to or accepting a non-episcopal minister's celebration is not right. Here again, the Synod said it could not do that. On the other hand, it said our Clergy would have full liberty to continue to instruct their people what they think right, provided that such an instruction is not contrary to the governing principles of the united Church. The principle that governs this is Const. III. 4; so that no clergyman could say to his people they ought not to go to other Churches; no clergyman could discipline any for doing so, and none could refuse to recognise as Communicants those who have already been Communicants in any one of the uniting Churches.

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## Resolutions of the Methodist Conference, 1933 on South India Church Union

The following Report of the Committee on South India Church Union was presented:

'The Committee has met twice during the year, on November 8th, 1932, and June 2nd, 1933. At the first meeting various resolutions were adopted with a view to the improvement of the scheme, and were sent to our representatives in India. The Eleventh Session of the Joint Committee in India was held in Madras from November 29th to December 3rd, 1932, and the report of that Session, together with the resolutions of the South Indian Synods and the Provincial Synod, were laid before our meeting of June 2nd. In view of the strong representations made by our Provincial Synod, and endorsed by the Conference, that inter-communion should be made possible in order to increase the spirit of unity between the consulting Churches, it is gratifying to report that the members of the Joint Committee in India arranged for inter-communion at their last Session. On three successive mornings, ministers of the Anglican, Methodist, and the S.I.U. Church conducted the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper and had communion with one another and with our Lord.'

The Conference adopted the following resolutions of the Committee on South India Church Union:

1. The Conference reaffirms the conviction expressed by the Wesleyan Conference at Leeds in 1930, and at Birmingham in 1931, that organic union is in the interests of the Kingdom of God in South India.

2. The Conference is deeply impressed by the spirit manifested during the negotiations and rejoices that at the Communion services held in response to the appeal of our Provincial Synod, steps were taken which enabled the Joint Committee in India to meet at the Table of the Lord. The Conference prays that the spiritual forces which were liberated in this inter-communion, and which made the Committee one, may be shared by the South Indian Church at large.

3. The Conference notes that the Scheme of Union is not yet in its final form, and desires further elucidation of two important matters. The first concerns the interpretation of the pledge 'that the united Church will at all times be careful not to allow any over-riding of conscience either by

Church authorities or by majorities, and that it will not in any of its administrative acts knowingly transgress the long-established traditions of any of the Churches from which it has been formed. Neither forms of worship or ritual, nor a ministry, to which they have not been accustomed or to which they conscientiously object, will be imposed upon any congregation; and no arrangements with regard to these matters will knowingly be made either generally or in particular cases which would either offend the conscientious convictions of persons directly concerned, or which would hinder the development of complete unity within the united Church or imperil its progress towards union with other Churches.'

The Conference would like to know whether the clause relating to 'administrative acts' means that no bishop can ever sanction the occasional celebration of Holy Communion by a non-episcopally ordained minister in a congregation which has always been accustomed to the services of episcopally ordained ministers, even if that congregation desires a non-episcopally ordained minister so to celebrate. Further, would not the pledge, as at present worded, allow any minority, even of one person, in a diocese to veto the participation of presbyters in the laying on of hands at the consecration of a bishop? It would aid the Conference if a detailed interpretation of all that is implied in the pledge were given by the Provincial Synod, or by our representatives on the Joint Committee.

The second difficulty is that of the consecration of bishops. The Conference notes that the view expressed by the Wesleyan Methodist Conference of 1931, that 'presbyters should always take part in the laying on of hands at the consecration of a bishop,' has not been accepted by the Eleventh Session of the Joint Committee in Madras. It gathers that the difficulty in accepting the proposal was mainly due to the advice given to the Church of India by the Lambeth Conference of 1930. The bishops then said: 'With regard to subsequent Consecrations we hold that the participation by Presbyters in the Laying on of Hands could not, in any way, affect the validity of the Consecration, provided of course that three Bishops take part in the Laying on of Hands; but we prefer that it be not adopted lest it should tend to confusion and we would urge that if it be adopted, care should be taken to make it plain that the Presbyters do not take part as Consecrators.' (Report of the Lambeth Conference, p. 129.)

The Conference notes that already the Provincial Synod has resolved to ask our delegates to the Joint Committee to secure the insertion of a note in the Basis of Union declaring our teaching on the parity of the ministry. In view of the fact that the question of the consecration of Bishops may be re-opened at the next Session of the Joint Committee in India, the Conference urges that further consideration be given to the whole subject.

4. The Conference records its gratitude to the Provincial Synod and to the District Synods in South India, for the care taken in representing the views of our Church. In particular, the Conference endorses the view expressed in the letter of the Provincial Synod that in the dioceses of the future Church committees should be set up which will in effect station the minister and that the Bishop would be the person to see that their proposals were carried out.

5. The Conference expresses its satisfaction that arrangements are being made that the Scheme shall be explained to all our people in the four South Indian Districts, and hopes that further efforts will be made in this work of education.

6. The Conference learns with satisfaction that a supply of copies of the revised Scheme of Union is now available in Great Britain, and is on sale at the Methodist Bookroom, and the Conference urges on the ministers and laity of the Methodist Church that they shall read and diligently study it.

7. That in the event of the South India Provincial Synod asking the Conference for a delegate to discuss and consult with them on the subject of union, the President is authorised to send a suitable delegate to South India.

The above resolutions are satisfactory, but the debate that preceded the passing of them was not so satisfactory. The shadow of the great Anglo-Catholic ceremony of the mass at the White City was over the Conference, and many feared what union with the Anglican Church might lead to. In spite of fears and misgivings, the Conference realised that the union of the Church of God is the goal of our striving, and should be pursued. In effect it said, 'Your Scheme is not complete. We see difficulties; but go on with your task, for we believe it is for the good of the Church in South India.'

One of the two difficulties mentioned in the resolutions has already been made clear by the letter of the Metropolitan in the last issue of *Church Union*. This is not the place to discuss the second, but I believe that too can be overcome.

The Conference feels that the time is scarcely ripe for the consummation of the union, and more must be done both in India and Britain before the final verdict can be given. This is true. Therefore no hasty votes should be taken till the teaching of the New Testament on the unity of the Church is apprehended by its members and ample time given for a thorough examination of the Scheme.

The Conference has shown the way to approach the Scheme, viz., by examining it and pointing out those portions of it which do not commend themselves. Here in India we must follow the same method. To block the way to union because there are parts of the Scheme about which we are doubtful is not the way to approach the problem. We believe that every Christian would say that in the circumstances in which we are placed in South India, union would be a blessing to the Kingdom of God. Here is a Scheme that has been formulated with much searching of heart, prayer, and thought. It is the only Scheme that is before the Churches. Their duty is clear. Examine, criticise, find out the weak spots of the Scheme, and let the Joint Committee consider them, and see if the Scheme cannot be made more generally acceptable. At this stage it would be a calamity to Christendom for any one of the three Churches to decline to go further with the negotiations. The Methodist Church believes in union, but is not quite satisfied with the Scheme. It says so to its representatives in India, and bids them go on with their good work and improve it. This is the attitude the Churches in South India should adopt to-day.

H. GULLIFORD



## Honestly Facing all the Facts

I have read with much interest the last number of *Church Union Notes*. I see underlying much that has been written, a strong desire that the real differences between the negotiating bodies should be frankly faced. I am sure that this is all to the good because it is only by a completely honest disclosure of differences that we shall be able to arrive at that underlying unity which alone can form the true foundation of a stable and enduring union.

It is because I so deeply desire the end of our deplorable differences that I am venturing to suggest that one of the most vital points of difference has not yet been adequately faced. I refer to the matter of the sacramental life of the Church. It seems to me that the short paragraph on Sacraments (Page 4, para 4 of the *Proposed Scheme of Union*) is wholly inadequate. There are many within the ranks of the Anglican Communion who hold that the Sacraments are the God-ordained means whereby the Christian is first of all brought into vital union with his Lord and subsequently enabled to preserve and nourish that union. (See para. 7 of the Prefatory Statement, and also Declaration 1 of the Constitution of the Church of India.) It is because of this vital importance of the Sacraments that we hold the need of a specially ordained Ministry. Hitherto the stress has been laid on the Ministry but surely the Ministry derives its necessity from the fact of the Sacraments. Personally I am convinced that as soon as the amazing gift of the Sacraments began to be realised, the need of an authoritative ministry was also realised. Hence the well known saying of S. Ignatius :—*Ubi episcopus, ibi ecclesia*.

Unless I believed that our blessed Lord had ordained the means whereby His very life is imparted to us, I could have no hope of being able to follow Him along the narrow way which He has told us leads to eternal life. But here it is necessary to make it absolutely plain that we do not consider the Sacraments as ends in themselves. They are means only and the end is Christ. Every time the sacramentalist receives the Blessed Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ, the longing of his heart is 'He must increase but I must decrease'. Is it not here that we find the ultimate hope and foundation of union? It is because the negotiating bodies, both collectively and individually long with all their hearts for Christ to reign, that they long to banish for ever the things which separate them from each other at the present time. We do not ask, we do not expect, that all should express their belief in the Sacraments in exactly the same language as we do, but we do plead for some clear statement regarding the Sacraments and the connection of belief in them with the need for the Apostolic Ministry.

I have personally seen the amazing change that comes over some of our congregations when the vision of sacramental life dawns upon them, I

honestly am convinced that it is only a grip on this life which will enable our people to withstand the persecution which I for one foresee as coming upon them before another generation has passed. To accept Episcopacy merely as method of government and a means of bringing Episcopalians into the union seems to me to be fraught with grave danger for the future.

A union which has as one of its basic principles a common belief in the Sacraments as a chief means (ordained by God) for developing the Christ-life in the Church and in each of her members, will leave ample scope for a wide liberty regarding modes of worship.

The union would be on a positive basis and no one would be asked to deny any of the grace that had come to him through Christian bodies at present separated from each other. Surely it is 'in Christ' that our union will be consummated and I would plead for a definite recognition of the Sacraments as the means par excellence whereby we may each and all arrive at the state in which St. Paul's great saying 'I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me' may be realised.

GEORGE ASSAM.

## **Resolution of the North Tamil Council of the S.I.U.C. on Church Union**

The North Tamil Church Council rejoice in the increasing amount of unity and co-operative service manifested by the three Church bodies whom it is sought to unite in this scheme of Union. This increasing amount of fellowship has been evidenced in the inter-Communion Services which have been held at Retreats, held to consider this matter of Church Union, as well as in the Joint Union Committee meetings, and also in the inter-change of pulpits and in the united efforts in Evangelistic Campaigns. We pray that this growing together may deepen still further and increase.

But while we recognise that there may be for a long time to come a difference of opinion among many individuals concerning the differing beliefs and practices of the combining Churches, it is difficult to see how there can be any real union if there is not a sincere and hearty recognition by the uniting Churches as Churches of the equal validity of the orders of the ministry of each Church, with which is bound up so closely the spiritual value to the individual of the central act of worship of the Church in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The North Tamil Church Council therefore are prepared to give a General Approval to the Scheme of Union, provided that the other uniting bodies are prepared to recognize the equal



spiritual validity of the ministerial orders of each of the uniting Churches. Apart from this, the union will tend to be artificial, and seem to cast a slur upon, if not to constitute a denial of, the reality and validity of the faith and worship of our fathers which is an impossible position for the North Tamil Church Council to adopt.

D. P. DORAISAMY,

*Aravashi.*

*Secretary,*

15-7-1933.

N.T.C.C.

## Resolutions of various Groups in England Regarding Church Union in South India

We, the members of the Madingley Group consisting of representatives of the Anglican, Presbyterian, Wesleyan and Congregational Theological Training Colleges attached to the University of Cambridge, and assembled, 25 in number, at our annual meeting at Madingley on Ascension Day desire to express to the leaders of the South Indian Reunion Scheme our deep interest in the progress of Reunion both in South India and other parts of the world. In particular, we would assure the South Indian leaders that we are following the crucial last stages not only with interest, but with a sincere prayer that under the guidance of the Holy Spirit a Reunion according to His Will shall be established. We rejoice to know that despite all criticism and discouragement you are going forward with hope and confidence. During the course of the next year we shall be making a close study of the text of the last draft proposals.

Yours sincerely,

W. L. S. FLEMING,

Trinity Hall & Westcott House,

Chairman.

T. W. TAYLOR,

Christ's College & Wesley House,

Secretary.

This South East Essex Branch of the A.E.G.M., having followed with great interest and sympathy the proposals for Union in South India and believing that visible fellowship between Christ's disciples is the will of God, cordially endorses the proposals for Church Union in South India; believing that they will make for the growth of the Native Church through which the

country must be evangelised and that they make adequate provision for the maintenance of the Faith, the due administration of the Sacraments and a ministry which is truly Catholic.

At our annual meeting of the Northern Federation of the Anglican Evangelical Group Movement held in Carlisle on June 9th the following resolution was unanimously passed and I was asked to send you a copy.

'We heartily support the scheme for re-union of the Church in South India on the ground that we believe it to be in conformity with the mind of Christ, essential to the progress of the Church in India and throughout the world and the expressed desire of the Indian Christians themselves.'

Your faithfully,

HERBERT CROSSLAND,

(Vicar of Houghton, Carlisle)

(*Hon. Secretary*).

(CANON) T. S. BOULTON,

Vicar of Crosly-on-Eden

(*Chairman of the meeting*).

I write as Secretary of the East Midland Federation of the Anglican Evangelical Group Movement, representing some 120 members, all clergy, out of the total of 1,500 or so in the Movement altogether. The Federation recently held its annual Meeting in Leicester, and in the course of the proceedings the following Resolution was unanimously passed.

'We follow with prayer and deep interest the progress of the South India Re-Union Scheme, and wish to assure all those now working for the successful fruition of their plans that they have our sympathetic support and prayers as they face the complicated problems of the final stages of Corporate Re-Union.'

We wish those in India to know that there is in this country a very large and influential body of people who support the Scheme and long for the time when Re-Union of the South India Churches will be an accomplished fact.

I may add that I have visited India as (former) General Secretary of the British and Foreign Bible Society, and met many members of the uniting Churches.

I am,

Yours very sincerely,

Sd/ C. H. M. BOUGHTON,

(Canon Theological of Leicester).

## Dr. James Black on Church Union

'What chance for Union?' is the question asked by Dr. Black, in the article which has been reprinted from the *British Weekly* (see *News and Views*, iv, 1, p. 31). The only answer that can be given is, 'None whatever—so long as people look on union from Dr. Black's standpoint.'

When Dr. Black says that the sects and divisions of the Church seldom trouble him, and that they are as natural as the disparities of human thinking, I find it difficult to believe that he has made a serious study of New Testament teaching on the subject. There certainly were disparities of thinking in the early Church. The church in Corinth, for instance, had some members who thought Paul should be followed, and others who took Apollos as their leader. The church in Rome had disparity of thinking on such questions as that of meat offered to idols and the observance of special days; while the church in Philippi was in danger of being disunited through the disparity of thinking of two women who had difficulty of being of the same mind. But in no case does Paul tolerate for a single moment the idea that disparity of thinking should lead to separateness of organisation. 'Is Christ divided?' he says to the Corinthians in tones of thunder. To the 'strong' and the 'weak' in the Roman church he appeals for mutual consideration, 'that ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God'. He never dreams of suggesting that the 'strong' form one church organisation and the 'weak' another. To get Euodia and Syntyche to be of one mind he invokes the aid of a 'true yoke-fellow'; and further, as if afraid that this personal disparity of thinking might spread, and lead to the rise of factions in the church, he brings to bear on the subject the loftiest of all considerations—the self-emptying of the Son of God.

Paul did not, of course, mean that everyone must be of the same *opinion*. The 'strong' and the 'weak' could not be compelled to *adopt* the opinions of the other people, but if they had the 'mind of Christ', that is, the spirit of self-sacrifice, they would *tolerate* them and worship along with those holding them. Why should it be otherwise with the Church of to-day?

Instead of taking this position, and pleading with those who have been led by disparity of thinking—whether of themselves or of their ancestors—to live under separate ecclesiastical roofs, and urging them to come under a single roof, Dr. Black tries to justify the existing separation by 'two indubitable points'—that 'every division has added its peculiar quota to the total contribution of Christian thinking and practice', and second, that 'all the diverse forms of Church Order and Government sprang from passionate ideals of what the Church of Christ should be and what the truth of God is.' Stated thus absolutely these two points are far from indubitable. We may gladly admit that many divisions have contributed something, and that many leaders of divisions have had noble motives. But surely it is obvious that in far too many cases no contribution worth mentioning has been made, and that motives far short of the highest have crept in.



Dr. Black goes on to speak of 'a far finer unity than formal union'. That there is such a unity is of course true in a sense; but the question must still be asked, 'Is this finer unity easily realised if those who ought to be conscious of it are kept from visible fellowship by their ecclesiastical separation?' If they cannot be 'of one mouth' will it be easy to be 'of one mind'? That it is so to some extent Dr. Black admits when he speaks of one line of cleavage as being 'fairly final and absolute'. He says this must be faced, and uses strong language in condemning people who believe that even this line may be crossed. The line is that which separates those whose slogan is 'where the bishop is, there is the Church,' and those who believe that 'where Christ is, there is the Church'. But here again Dr. Black is guilty of overstatement. In saying that according to the former view there can be no Church without a bishop, he says 'This is actually the case in all Episcopal Churches'. What about the Church of Sweden, which is in full fellowship with the non-episcopal Lutheran Churches? Or the Churches of Denmark, whose acknowledgment of other Churches takes an even wider range? Or the large section in the Church of England which believes in Episcopacy only as conducive to the well-being of the Church, and not as necessary for its existence?

The other view is said to be that 'wherever a few Christians band themselves together in the name of Jesus, there is the Church'. Is not this a quite illegitimate use of a notable saying of our Lord? Surely He cannot have meant that where two or three—or two or three hundreds, or thousands—separate themselves from their fellow-believers because of differences in opinion or taste, or because of pride or pique, they can claim Christ's presence. Only if the separation is one to which the two or three have been led after the deepest thought and most earnest prayer; only if it is the inevitable consequence of such a departure from Christ on the part of a tyrannical majority as to make it clear to the minority that loyalty to Christ demands separation from some of their brethren, can division be justified even as a temporary measure. And when the cause of offence has been removed, the two or three who deliberately remain in separation have no right to think that Christ's promise applies to them.

In the same paragraph Dr. Black shows that he is working on an unscriptural idea of the Church. 'The Church,' he says 'is made by its Christian members'. Not at all. Being the body of Christ, it is *His* creation. We are not called upon to make it, but to find our place in it.

No, there is no 'chance for Union' until the whole subject has been studied more deeply. As to Dr. Black's proposal for a union of all the non-episcopal Churches through the appointment of a Commission, it need only be said that it is not along the line proposed that the Churches which have actually accomplished unions, have gone. Is it not better to see whether we cannot proceed further along the path which has led in so many cases to a happy issue, than to try one which so far is untrodden?

J. H. MACLEAN.

## Why I Favour the Church Union Scheme

When in 1920 I went to the Bangalore Joint Committee Meeting it was in a hostile spirit. I came, I saw, and was conquered. Having been brought up as a rank Congregationalist, the idea of surrendering my spiritual liberty to a Bishop was most repugnant to me. I thought I was going to fight for a principle, but I found that it was, after all, an ignorant prejudice created in my mind by my environment. When I came in contact with Bishops who, far from being autocrats, were Christian leaders with a tolerant spirit, my fears gradually vanished. And then, the proposition before us was *constitutional* Episcopacy. We were to recognise a super-clergyman in the new Church whose powers were to be limited by a constitution, and who would be appointed, and who could be dismissed, by the councils of the Church. In brief, episcopacy was to be rendered harmless by the qualification, 'constitutional'. This seemed to be an eminently reasonable compromise. Further, I began to appreciate the advantages of episcopal government. First, a large majority of Christendom is under episcopal rule, and if we are to work for the ultimate reunion of the severed members of Christ's Body, it is the minority that should accommodate itself to the wishes of the preponderating majority. Secondly, it was Episcopacy that in the history of the Church symbolised and maintained the wider unity of the Church and its continuity in the face of schisms and divisions. It is such a church government that is best calculated to bring together today the divided forces of Christendom. Thirdly, there will be the gain in order, regularity, and continuity, matters on which we ourselves of the Free Churches insist. Lastly, an Episcopate accords well with the *Guru* tradition of India, which puts an emphasis on the contagious power of personality. Outstanding personalities vested with authority and characterised by deep spirituality, cannot but be a great asset to the Church.

My next bugbear was Apostolic Succession. I had read Anglo-Catholic Literature, according to which spiritual grace is transmitted mechanically by the laying on of hands of one—good or bad—who is in the Apostolical succession. As I told a friend of mine, I should prefer the Hindu superstition of my forefathers to this sort of Christian superstition. I found out, however, that this theory was confined to the Anglo-Catholic section of the Anglican Church, and that there were eminent theologians of that Church who repudiated it. Whatever that might be, the proposition before us was not the acceptance of this theory, but that of 'historic' episcopate, which as the *Basis of Union* says: 'does not bind the united Church to any particular theory concerning the orders of the ministry'. Being not satisfied with this statement, the S.I.U.C. section has made the point doubly clear by stating in a foot-note that 'it understands by the term (historic) that for many centuries episcopacy has been a form of government that has persisted

in the Church and is in that sense entitled to be described as 'historic'. In spite of this clear declaration there are people who are obsessed with the bogey of Apostolical Succession!

There was another objection that weighed strongly with me at the beginning. Why worry ourselves with the niceties of western theological differences, and not evolve something Indian *de novo*? Here I must say frankly that I would much prefer that Indians be encouraged by our western friends to evolve a truly Indian Church without losing the rich heritage of the West. But we have to face facts, and make the best of the situation. The creation of a new Church is not within the range of practical politics. For such an evolution Indian Christians will have to stand on a common platform, but, dependent as they are on foreign help, they are not in a position to come together. So the only way to bring them together is to consummate a union, even if it has to be done by the adjustment of western differences. I am confident that once the union is consummated, the evolution will be in the Indian direction. Indeed, the *Basis of Union* anticipates it: 'The United Church conserving all that is of spiritual value in its Indian heritage, will express under Indian conditions and in Indian forms the spirit, the thought, and the life of the Church Universal.'

Another objection raised by some belonging to the Free Churches is that the scheme is practically not one of union, but one of absorption—absorption by the Anglican Church. For one thing, these are afraid that the new Church will, in time, become too ritualistic and put too much emphasis on forms and ceremonies. These good people are no doubt suffering from an inferiority complex. Why suppose that the Episcopal element will swallow up the Free Church element, and not *vice versa*? They are perhaps afraid that ritualism will have a greater appeal to Indian Christians. What if it does? If the new Church of its own free will becomes ritualistic, and incline towards episcopal traditions, it will only show that this is the kind of worship most suited to the genius of the Indian people. I, however, have no such fears. If one reads the Scheme carefully, one will find that all the various elements are so represented, and so much freedom is given in the matter of worship, that the new Church instead of being Episcopal, Presbyterian, or Congregational, will evolve a common mind combining the best features of the three Churches. There will be an ideal combination of freedom and authority, and of personal power with widely diffused responsibility.

I wish to invite the attention especially of my Free Church brethren to two considerations that appeal to me powerfully. To me the most significant thing in the whole Scheme is the admission (perhaps for the first time in the history of Christianity) that the Free Church ministers are truly ministers of the 'Word and the Sacraments'. To my mind the very citadel of the Episcopal position has been captured. That my estimate is correct may be seen from what a great Anglo-Catholic leader says in connection with the thirty years' rule: 'If particular ministers of the Word and the



Sacraments may be received for thirty years, why not for three hundred years?' After the concession of such a vital point, our concessions in matters like the episcopacy seem to me to be comparatively trivial.

The second point in the Scheme I should like to stress is that no attempt is made to arrive at a complete agreement on all points, and that some points are left to be settled by the future Church. As the Scheme says, 'The act of union will initiate a process of *growing together* into one life and of advance towards that complete unity'. The present scheme itself is the result of this 'growing together'. Many of the members of the Joint Committee were at the beginning sceptical about the Scheme, but when they conferred together, prayed together, and lived together, they so grew together in spiritual unity as to devise a scheme with unanimity. The welding together of the Presbyterian and Congregational elements in the S.I.U.C. is another example of this process of growing together. Unity cannot be attained by theological controversies. If some people are opposed to union, it is because they have not had an opportunity to live together and learn to appreciate the others' point of view.

In the discussion of this question we must use a little common sense. Let us not confuse principles with prejudices. The humour of the situation in some of our vehement discussions does not dawn upon some of us. We often fight not because we have conscientious scruples, but because we are wedded to certain ways of worship or to certain forms of Church government. How happens it that *all* who are brought up in one way have one 'principle' while others have an opposed 'principle'? The humour of the situation is increased by the fact that our differences are largely geographical and not theological. We do not have even the ingrained prejudices of centuries that are to be found in the West. Again, we should possess a sense of proportion in the discussion of such great questions. We must not mix up essentials with non-essentials. Nor should we forget that we cannot have things all our own way. There should be a spirit of give-and-take. We must not forget that we are after union and not absorption.

Lastly, we should have the will to union. Our Lord desired that His disciples should be one. That He meant a *visible* unity is plain from the reason He gave for such unity: 'That the world may see that Thou hast sent Me'. If we, a microscopic minority among the teeming millions of India, are to bear witness for Christ, we Christians must get together.

We believe that the success or failure of the Scheme is bound to have an effect on the movement for union throughout the world. If it does not go through, it will set back the hands of the clock of progress considerably. If it does, it will initiate a movement that is bound to spread throughout Christendom,

J. V. CHELLIAH.

## How can a Pastor Interest his Church Members in the Study of Church Union?

That the Church which is the body of our Lord and Master has been rent by divisions, is distressing to His true servant. The world is talking Union. South India has set the ball in motion. The Wesleyans, Anglicans, Presbyterians and Congregationalists have jointly issued a scheme in which the world is interested. It has engaged even the attention of politicians. It is the result of deep prayer and toil for fourteen long years. But it is however strange to notice that a large number of congregations is indifferent. From among the leaders there are many who give no personal devotion to it. We pastors have been in danger of thinking too little of the need of educating and interesting our congregations in this important matter. In the history of the Indian Church there is no other greater question of momentous issue for our congregations to become interested in. It is no doubt true that several do not welcome the scheme. Why? It is not because the scheme has been sufficiently studied, examined and found unsuitable or because a more suitable scheme could be devised. In a number of churches and a few conferences which it has been my privilege to visit it was found that indifference, prejudice and want of education on the subject were largely its cause. I met with a number of delegates who at the close of the conferences had entirely changed their views. How urgent therefore it is to the Pastor to interest his church members in the study of Church Union.

Retreats, conferences and literature no doubt have helped. But all these could not go the entire way. If the individual church is not interested in the movement, the efforts must fail. The burden therefore of educating the people rests on the Pastor. He however is not expected to force acceptance of the scheme.

The following methods I think, will be found helpful to promote interest in the study of Church Union.

1. The Pastor will do well to preach a series of sermons on this movement. The subject of 'the Church in the Mind of Christ' will make a good beginning of the series. In this connection I would refer the readers to the valuable sermon preached in Tamil at the Nagercoil Conference by the Rev. Dr. Banninga in the month of April. Printed copies are available.

'The teaching of Paul the Apostle of the oneness of the Church', 'the Church is the body of Christ' and all such subjects may form the series.

While talking of Union we cannot but here think of disunion. A divided Church certainly has a bad effect upon Evangelisation. Suppose that in two separate parts of a District two groups of Mohammedans live and that in one of these areas the Church of England works and in the other the S.I.U.C. If by chance these two groups of Mohammedans become Christians, they

no doubt will be Christians not of one Church but of two different denominations—one belonging to the Church of England and the other S.I.U.C. It will be sad to see that while, before embracing Christianity, they were one body in Mohammed, now in Christ they are split into two. Disunion is a waste caused by overlapping in the work of the Missions and Churches. In the same centres which are too small even for a single body, several disconnected bodies work. By bringing these Churches together into one united Church, the difficulties experienced by them with regard to finance and workers will be considerably removed.

The evil of disunion is far-reaching. It affects the interests of the country, national and political. The Churches by their divisions, which is a scandal in the eyes of the outsider, have neither position nor power to bear witness to the world and render help in its present condition. For India's progress Union is of vast importance.

For Union why do we want the form of government proposed in this scheme? In the history of the three uniting bodies there have been valuable experience of church life, doctrine and organization and the Church of India cannot afford to lose these benefits.

2. In every Church arrangements must be made for addresses and papers on such subjects as follows :—

- (1) Why do we want Union?
- (2) The history of the world movement for Union.
- (3) The history of the South India movement for Union.
- (4) Spiritual history of the three uniting Churches.
- (5) Basis of Union—Scriptures, creed, sacraments and ministry.
- (6) The main features of the Scheme—e.g., the inclusion of the elements of three traditions; system of organization accepted without theories; fellowship to be maintained with other Churches.
- (7) The relations of ministers and members of the united Church from the time of its organization until all ministers are episcopally ordained.
- (8) Intercommunion.
- (9) The functions and work of Bishops and the Historic Episcopate in a constitutional form.
- (10) Biographies of great Bishops, the Wesleys and Presbyterian and Congregational ministers which were brilliant examples of the grace and power manifested by the Holy Spirit Who has not been a respecter of denominations.
- (11) The main rules about public worship.
- (12) Provision for congregational responsibility..
- (13) The place given to the women in the Scheme.
- (14) Discipline of the Church.



3. In certain places special days for special and united meetings are appointed which could be followed by other Churches. Where there are more than one Church body united meetings must be held. On a certain day of every month hold open air meetings in different centres. On an appointed Sunday of each month united prayer meetings held in rotation in the different Churches will be of great value. In these services the pamphlet recently issued 'Meditation and Intercession for the union of Christ's Church' may be most profitably used and this should be used in every congregation. Once a quarter evangelistic meetings may be held simultaneously at various centres.

4. Study groups should be formed in which the members may be asked to prepare answers to picked-up questions and the various subjects of Union discussed. Special groups for women will help much.

The above suggestions are not exhaustive. They are only a few leading to the adoption of new and suitable methods according to particular existing conditions. Our object is not to press the Churches to accept the Scheme at once but that the whole church must necessarily be led to know the principles underlying the proposed scheme and the constitution of the united Church and its provisions. Our pulpits should no more be silent. Our people should not be left to continue in their indifference.

M. PETER.

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## The Indian Church of the Future

(A paper read by Rev. H. Sumitra at the last meeting of M.R.C.C.)

### I. ITS UNITY.

It is not possible to predict anything about the future of the Church in India. When middle and upper classes enter the Church in large numbers the character of the church is bound to be very different from what it is at present. Till quite recent times those who have accepted the Gospel and are glad to be followers of Christ, are largely from the lower classes. These have been content to abandon their former beliefs and practices and adopt whatever was offered them in the Christian Church. When the middle and upper classes are attracted to Christ they will not only receive from the church but also contribute to it out of their rich religious heritage. We are but waiting and working for the day when the Indian Church will be truly Christian and truly Indian.

In attempting to determine for ourselves the nature of the unity in the future Indian Church, we should not fail to take into account the nature of the unity in non-Christian communities and the present condition of the Churches in India. The two big non-Christian communities in the country,

viz., the Muslim and the Hindu communities exhibit a strong and effective unity. The Muslims are united in their devotion to Muhammad, belief in the Kuran and obedience to Islam. Though there are among them several differences in religious beliefs and practices and they are divided into certain sects they are determined to be reckoned as one community and they work together as one body. They do not allow their differences to divide them into mutually exclusive bodies, but hold fast the things that are common to all of them. This unity extends beyond this country to all lands wherein Muslims are found. Muslims all over the world belong to one brotherhood, one family; they are united.

Looking at the Hindu community perhaps one is at first struck by the differences among its members. They are divided into hundreds of sects and sub-sects, which are by no means friendly to one another. Members of each caste or sect live their lives without any fellowship with members of every other caste or sect. Instances could be given of mutual jealousy and enmity between the castes and sects. And yet Hindus of all castes form one community. It is difficult to say what binds them together as one religious body. Devotion to one *guru* or religious teacher does not unite them, for they have many *gurus*. Common faith does not make them one, for a Hindu can believe or disbelieve almost anything. Perhaps it is birth that is common to all—birth in the Hindu community. Perhaps also some kind of acceptance of the Hindu Scriptures and the adoption of the Hindu way of life make them one community. When these Muslims and Hindus enter the Christian Church in large numbers they will want something to bind them together in one fellowship. The question before us is what is to be the bond that will unite all believers in Christ in this land in such a way that they will live and work as one family, as members of one body.

Having worked as the Muslim and Hindu communities one cannot but remark that the bond of union in those communities cannot be compared to the bond that unites the members of the Christian Church into one body. The Christian Church is far more than a community or a society. Its members are far more intimately connected with one another than the members of any non-Christian community. For this reason far more is expected of the followers of Christ than of others. As the ideal is so very high, our shortcomings are so very marked. But let it not be forgotten that the ties that bind us to Christ and to one another are spiritual purely. We are united in Christ,—in the experience of his salvation, and in humble service rendered for His sake.

There are at least three ways of conceiving the unity of the Church. First there is the spiritual unity of all believers in Christ. This is a very real form of union, but many hold it to be insufficient in itself. The spiritual unity is expected to manifest itself in a common ministry, worship

and government of the Church. Ideas concerning the Church's ministry, worship and government vary so very much that when an attempt is made to secure a common understanding on these matters the spiritual unity is very nearly destroyed. Consequently spiritual unity of all believers in Christ is only an idea. It has not been possible for Christians of this land to put this idea into practice.

Federal union is another form of the unity of the Church. For some reason or other this form of union has not been fully tried in this country. Churches in India have been content for the most part to live separately or in some cases to unite together and form united Churches. It is argued that in this land of many missions there are so many opportunities for co-operation and that these opportunities are so well used that all the gains of a federal union are already being experienced, and that a formal federation of Churches will not confer any more benefit upon the constituents of such a federation. For this reason it is contended that the only desirable object worth striving for is an organic union of the existing Churches.

Perhaps organic union is the most complete expression of the unity of the Church. The united Church of Northern India and the South India United Church are two notable examples of organic union in India. In these unions the process of growing together is by no means complete. There are still some diversities and discrepancies known and tolerated for the sake of preserving union which is desired by all. But the Churches included in these unions are either presbyterian or congregational. The proposed scheme of Church Union in South India represents an attempt to combine in one organization the S.I.U.C., the Methodist Church in S. India and the four South Indian dioceses of the Church of India, Burma, and Ceylon, which is an episcopal Church.

Discussions concerning the proposed scheme have revealed the condition of the Churches in India. The ordinary minister and the layman are only now taking a real part in the discussions. The implications of the scheme are not clear to the majority of members. The terms used are strange to many of them, the emphasis on certain points is not understood and the proposed organization looks unduly cumbersome. While some are in a position to accept the scheme, many are suspicious and would rather not face the task of either accepting or rejecting the Scheme. The truth is that the Churches are not in a position to consider such a scheme. Those in non-episcopal Churches simply do not recognize the necessity for the provision that continuity with the Historic Episcopate should be preserved effectively. In the Church Council to which I belong we could not discuss the provision about the Nicene Creed, because besides the missionaries and two or three Indian ministers no one had ever seen the creed. So far not many wise and not many mighty have been called into the Indian Church.



I believe the proposed scheme is an admirable one. It is the result of earnest prayer and seeking of God's will for about fourteen years. But it attempts to satisfy the Home Churches in the West. As far as the Indian Churches are concerned it is too theological; it lays too much emphasis upon things that are non-essential to the Indian Church. Indian Churches can and will unite on more primary and fundamental matters. They can unite on faith in Christ as the only Saviour and Lord, on the acceptance of the Holy Scriptures as containing all things necessary for salvation, and on the observance of the two sacraments. If acceptance of the two Historic Creeds and the Historic Episcopate is insisted upon as a condition of union the Churches may unite without knowing what they are doing or they may keep back without in the least desiring to be disunited. It could also be said that converts from non-Christian religions will be unable to appreciate the emphasis on traditional or intellectual standards and might one day throw them overboard.

Thinking of the Indian Church of the future, I believe its unity should consist of belief in Jesus Christ, in the Christian Scriptures and in the observance of the two sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. There may be differences in other matters, for there must be considerable variety in this land of many races and cultures. But it is essential that the ministers and the members of any one Church should be recognized as such by all the other Churches.

I plead that the Indian Church be first of all enabled to realise its spiritual unity. After it has done this it will be in a position to express its unity in the spirit in forms suitable to its genius and its circumstances. It may adopt some kind of federal union or organic union.

This procedure ought to be possible because disunion is generated and nourished by our uncharitable estimate of one another and of one another's arrangements. Words like 'regular', 'valid', 'efficacious', 'continuity' and 'succession' only betray our anxiety with regard to things that are secondary and non-fundamental; if we can learn to put first things first and to be charitable in all matters we can enjoy the spiritual unity which is the result of our common allegiance to the one Lord.

M.R.C.C. has arranged a comity of missions by which friction and overlapping are avoided and mutual respect and sympathy are engendered. Similarly if it could arrange a comity of Churches by which all ministers are recognised as ministers of Christ and all members as members of the one body of Christ it will have advanced the cause of Church Union in this land very considerably. If such common recognition could be given to ministers and members of Churches the way will be open for a community of life and service. The gain in the cause of Christ's Kingdom in this land will be incalculable.

## The Urgent Need for Church Union

Yesterday afternoon I witnessed in Bishop's College tank, Calcutta, the baptism of a Brahmin convert which impressed on me once again the urgent need for Church Union in South India. About six years ago a brilliant young Brahmin student, N. Venugopal, went to one of Dr. Stanley Jones's lectures and was deeply impressed by his presentation of Jesus as the conqueror of all fear. Venugopal began reading the New Testament and attending regularly the meetings of the Plymouth Brethren in Madras. In course of time all his close relations—this is the most interesting feature of his story—began to be attracted by Christianity. For sometime now all the members of his family (except his father) have been followers of the Lord Jesus Christ and have been attending regularly Christian worship. About twenty-five days ago the young man who is now holding a high post in the Railway Finance Service heard the call to receive baptism and to become a regular member of the Christian Church. He spoke about this to his Christian friends.

There are at least three important points to remember about a new convert entering the Christian Church.

1. He must not be confused and bewildered by the variety of Christian Churches and of the principles and traditions for which they stand.

2. At the same time he must realize that no one Christian Church is the true Body of Christ. That is a great danger which besets all earnest Christians—to think that they alone understand and practise the truth correctly and that everybody else is wrong. There is always a temptation to impress upon the new convert this truth. So rigid are our distinctions that the new Christian begins to move in a narrow groove identifying himself entirely with one Church and unaware of the beauty and depth of spiritual life in the other Churches. Therefore it is necessary to impress upon him vividly that truth that all Christians, however diverse their teachings, are followers of the Lord Jesus and constitute His Church.

3. Often the particular Church into which he is baptized begins to take a special pride in the new convert. He is their man. The others are not permitted to share their joy in helping him on in the Christian life.

Realizing these difficulties it was decided to hold a ceremony of Baptism in which the representatives of all the Christian Churches in Calcutta would have a share. Mr. Lal Mohan Patnaick, a lawyer who has given up his practice and is doing evangelistic work, offered an extempore prayer in which using characteristic Indian terminology he pleaded with God the Mother to treat the new Christian as her own son and to nurse him up in the Christian life. Rev. T. Sittler of the Bishop's College read out an exhortation composed of the chief New Testament passages on Baptism. As the young man is now attending a Presbyterian Church the Pastor of that Church immersed him. Bishop Pakenham Walsh made the sign of



the Cross and offered some prayers. Dr. Urquhart of the Presbyterian Church closed with a brief address and benediction. Then all the representatives of the Churches in Calcutta present on the occasion shook the new Christian by his hand and extended to him their warm Christian fellowship. There were among these a Methodist, a Congregationalist, a Baptist, a Wesleyan, a Seventh Day Adventist, a Plymouth Brother and a Salvation Army officer.

This ceremony, though indicating a spirit of good will, does not meet effectively all the problems which the young man will be called upon to face, especially in a large city like Calcutta where there are many Churches. This brings home once again to us in an acute form the need for Church Union. Steadily people of various religions are likely to join the Christian Church. How are they to be helped? How are they to be brought up in the Christian way? The difficult position of new converts face to face with the different claims of different Churches must convince us of the necessity for achieving Church Union as rapidly as possible in India.

The negotiations in South India began fourteen years ago. We should be deeply grateful to God for the measure of unanimity attained thus far. The negotiations in the Joint Committee have reached the final stage and now the fellowship in Holy Communion which members of the Joint Committee are having, is bringing us together intimately and closely. All the Christian world is watching with great concern the proceedings in South India. Success in South India will set on foot union movements in different parts of the world and failure in South India will mean tremendous setback to all union movements the world over. There are still two classes of people unwilling to assent to the present proposals for union—the extreme representatives of Freedom and the extreme representatives of Tradition. There are still Congregationalists in South India who uphold extreme ideas of Freedom and do not want to enter a Church where these are likely to be imperilled. There are also extreme Anglo-Catholics who are afraid that in the new united Church of South India their ideals might not be fulfilled. As long as these two classes of people stand apart there will be failure. In view of the enormous difficulties and dangers of our disunion it is necessary that they should come together and help in the formation of the new united Church bringing in their distinctive contributions.

The mass of Church people in South India are not yet convinced of the need for careful arrangements in connection with Church Union. They realize the necessity of Church Union. They are keenly anxious to come together but they do not understand why careful provision of the type suggested by the Joint Committee should be made. The Retreat-Conferences which have now been held in South India have been very useful. They should be followed up by other such Conferences.

I am glad the Bangalore Conference is continuing to explore the possibilities of Church Union along different lines. Though small, this is an important group and represents a valuable point of view. Their contention



that we should rethink this problem in the light of the New Testament is essentially correct. They are also right in saying that Church organization in India should take into account the accepted traditions of Indian spirituality, though they have not given so far any clear indication as to how this could be done. But they are certainly wrong in suggesting or seeming to suggest that twenty centuries of Christian History have no meaning. We acknowledge that there is a great deal of incrustation in theory and in practice and that this is undesirable. We should eliminate this and reach the essence of truth. To say this is one thing and to say that all Church History has no meaning is another. We cannot go back wholly to early Christian days for there were very few people then and they were continually expecting Christ's Second Coming. Let us grasp the essence of New Testament teaching and apply it boldly to Indian conditions.

These are difficult days and it is necessary that all those who are interested in Church Union should offer special prayer that the negotiations may be carried on soon to a successful close.

A. J. APPASAMY.

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